

Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma (Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta)

Translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Bodhi

- (1) Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Varanasi in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus of the group of five thus:
- (2) "Bhikkhus, these two extremes should not be followed by one who has gone forth into homelessness. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.
- (3) "And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathagata, which gives rise to vision ... which leads to Nibbana? It is this noble eightfold path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathagata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.
- (4) "Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.
- (5) "Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving which leads to re-becoming, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination.
- (6) "Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.
- (7) "Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: it is this noble eightfold path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.
- (8) "'This is the noble truth of suffering': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (9) "'This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (10) "'This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

- (11) "This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (12) "This noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (13) "This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been abandoned': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (14) "This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (15) "This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (16) "This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (17) "This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (18) "This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is to be developed': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (19) "This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering has been developed': thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.
- (20) "So long, bhikkhus, as my knowledge and vision of these four noble truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was not thoroughly purified in this way [*], I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Mara, and Brahma, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its devas and humans. But when my knowledge and vision of these four noble truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was thoroughly purified in this way, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Mara, and Brahma, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its devas and humans. The knowledge and the vision arose in me:
'Unshakeable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more renewed existence."
- (21) This is what the Blessed One said. Being pleased, the bhikkhus of the group of five delighted in the Blessed One's statement. And while this discourse was being spoken, there arose in the Venerable Kondanna the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma:
"Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation."
- (22) And when the Wheel of the Dhamma had been set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth devas raised a cry: "At Varanasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Mara or Brahma or by anyone in the world." Having heard the cry of the earth devas, the devas of the realm of the Four Great

Kings raised a cry: "At Varanasi ... this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped ... by anyone in the world."

Having heard the cry of the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings, the Tavatimsa devas ... the Yama devas ... the Tusita devas ... the Nimmanarati devas ... the Paranimmitavasavatti devas ... the devas of Brahma's company raised a cry: "At Varanasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Mara or Brahma or by anyone in the world."

(23) Thus at that moment, at that instant, at that second, the cry spread as far as the Brahma-world, and this ten thousandfold world-system shook, quaked, and trembled, and an immeasurable glorious radiance appeared in the world surpassing the divine majesty of the devas.

(24) Then the Blessed One uttered this inspired utterance: "Kondanna has indeed understood! Kondanna has indeed understood!" In this way the Venerable Kondanna acquired the name "Anna Kondanna: Kondanna Who Has Understood."

oOo

Note: [*] The three phases (tiparivāa) are:

- (i) the knowledge of each truth (sacca-nana), e.g., "This is the noble truth of suffering";
- (ii) the knowledge of the task to be accomplished regarding each truth (kicca-nana), e.g., "This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood"; and
- (iii) the knowledge of accomplishment regarding each truth (kata-nana), e.g., "This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood."

The twelve modes (dvadasakara) are obtained by applying the three phases to the four truths.